

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD OF THE
GRAND FORKS/EAST GRAND FORKS
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Thursday, August 21st, 2008 – 12:00 Noon
East Grand Forks City Hall Council Chambers**

CALL TO ORDER

Punky Beauchamp, Chairman, called the August 21st, 2008, meeting of the MPO Executive Policy Board to order at 12:08 p.m.

CALL OF ROLL

On a Call of Roll the following members were present: Punky Beauchamp, Gary Malm, Dick Grassel, Craig Buckalew (Proxy for Greg Leigh), and Doug Christensen.

Staff present were: Earl Haugen, GF/EGF MPO Executive Director; Nancy Ellis, GF/EGF MPO Planner, Senior; Teri Nelson, GF/EGF MPO Planner; and Peggy McNelis, GF/EGF Executive Assistant.

DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Chairman Beauchamp declared a quorum was present.

APPROVAL OF THE JULY 24TH, 2008, MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD

MOVED BY MALM, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE JULY 24TH, 2008 MINUTES OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD, AS SUBMITTED.

Voting Aye: Grassel, Beauchamp, Malm, Buckalew, and Christensen.

Voting Nay: None.

MATTER OF APPROVAL OF THE FINAL 2009-2012 T.I.P.

Haugen reported that copies of the Draft Final 2009-2012 T.I.P. were included in the packets. He stated that at their meeting last Wednesday, the Technical Advisory Committee held a public hearing on this item, with no public comments received.

Haugen distributed copies of updated tables, and went over them briefly. He explained that the first change was discussed at last months meeting, and involves the South 48th Street project whereby the NDDOT has said that they will have \$7,000,000 available for the project if needed, and it has to be delivered in 2010. He added, however, that they also asked that our T.I.P. document indicate that \$3,000,000 of the \$7,000,000 is pending eligibility determination.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 21st, 2008**

Christensen asked what that means. Haugen responded that it means that there are some issues with the total cost estimate that the feds may not fully participate in, particularly drainage. He explained that drainage is a large component of the entire project. Christensen asked how much of the project funds would be used for drainage. Haugen responded that he does not have that figure available at this time. Christensen asked, if this project does not happen, where does the \$7,000,000 go. Haugen responded that the \$7,000,000 would still be available for Grand Forks, and \$4,000,000 of that could be used for a different project in 2010, and the remaining \$3,000,000 would be available for another project in 2011, or the entire \$7,000,000 could be used in 2011. Christensen asked if this information could be put into memo form. Haugen responded he could do that.

Christensen commented that it is his understanding that the City of Grand Forks has \$1,200,000 programmed in this year's budget to study the South 48th Street project. Haugen responded that the City of Grand Forks currently has a contract with CPS to do the Project Concept Report (PCR), which is actually the study that determines what the final concept will be for the project, as well as what will ultimately become the agreement with the DOT and Federal Highway as to what the project will entail and what the eligibility might be for the different project components. He stated that every other week CPS sends out a project update, and for the last several updates have been, for the most part, waiting on the outcome of the storm sewer/drainage issue.

Christensen asked what the \$1,200,000 shown in the City's C.I.P. is for then. Haugen responded that he would guess it is for right-of-way purchase.

Christensen asked if it would be safe to say, then, that it wouldn't make any sense to purchase right-of-way until the PCR is completed. Haugen responded that the answer would depend on whether or not the City intends to do anything with South 48th Street in the near future, as the sooner the right-of-way is purchased, the less it will cost. He added that 80% of the proposed right-of-way is under the City's Right-Of-Way Preservation Ordinance as it is located on the quarter section line.

Christensen asked when the PCR will be completed. Haugen responded that he should contact Al Grasser, City Engineer, regarding that question.

Haugen reported that the second change involves the moving up of some work on Interstate 29. He explained that the State is requesting that the work programmed to occur on the Interstate between 32nd Avenue and North Washington be moved up to 2010 instead of in 2011. He commented that by the end of 2012 our Interstate system through Grand Forks will be substantially upgraded, including new north and south bound lanes south of 32nd Avenue to the Thompson Interchange.

Grassel asked about the Merrifield Interchange project, which was planned for 2012, and whether or not that is still on track. Haugen responded that in our Long Range Transportation Plan we talk about that being the start of the timetable to be followed for both the Merrifield Bridge and Interchange. He stated that currently the project the DOT is programming does not include an interchange, however.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 21st, 2008**

Haugen commented that each year a new T.I.P. is approved. He referred to the T.I.P. tables and pointed out that of the four years programmed, 2009 is what is called the annual element. He explained that what this means is that this is an agreement between the two parties that these projects will be done in 2009 and the federal dollar amounts shown are committed to those projects. He stated that the other three columns list future year projects, which can be changed up until the year they are programmed become the annual element.

Haugen stated that with the two changes he just discussed, adding the required language to the South 48th Street Project; and moving the I-29 project between 32nd Avenue and North Washington to 2010, the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are recommending that this body adopt the 2009-2012 T.I.P..

MOVED BY MALM, SECONDED BY GRASSEL, TO APPROVE THE FINAL 2009-2012 T.I.P. SUBJECT TO THE TWO CHANGES AS DISCUSSED.

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Beauchamp, Malm, Buckalew, and Christensen.
Voting Nay: None.***

Haugen reported that, just for information purposes, we have heard presentations and other information regarding the status of the Federal Highway Trust, and staff attended some meetings last week at which it was announced that congress will put \$8 Billion into the Highway Trust Fund, which will carry it into 2009 and 2010, thus we should have sufficient funds to continue transportation as we currently know it through 2010.

MATTER OF SELF-CERTIFICATION

Haugen reported that this is the first year that we are doing this as a completely separate agenda item. He explained that in the past we have always done this as part of our T.I.P. approval process, but per Federal Highway we are now required to do it as a separate activity.

Haugen commented that a public hearing was held at the August 13th, Technical Advisory Committee, and no comments were received, therefore both the Technical Advisory Committee and staff are recommending approval.

MOVED BY GRASSEL, SECONDED BY BUCKALEW, TO APPROVE THE 2008 SELF-CERTIFICATION

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Beauchamp, Malm, Buckalew, and Christensen.
Voting Nay: None.***

MATTER OF UPDATE ON MINNESOTA/4TH AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY

Ellis reported that the third Steering Committee meeting was held on August 6th, and she would like to go over some of the highlights discussed at that meeting.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 21st, 2008**

Ellis stated that the bulk of the meeting involved discussion on more defined potential alternative design solutions such as: 1) replacement of granitoid along the corridor with stamped and colored concrete; 2) intersection and access design with either a roundabout or configuration of the street intersections to 90-degrees; 3) lighting and signage to give a historical feel; 4) landscape enhancements such as median entrances to the city, bulb-outs, and a park with historical features.

Ellis commented that from a public perspective, the idea of using roundabouts was well received, however, there is still a concern about the amount of trees that might need to be removed in order to construct one. She stated that at the time of the meeting the State Historic Preservation Commission was more in favor of doing the 90-degree intersection because it has a more “old neighborhood” kind of feeling, but they are open to considering a roundabout if that is indeed the preferred option of the neighborhood.

Ellis stated that one item of particular interest is the fact that the State Historic Preservation Commission is conducting their own study, which will parallel this study. She explained that they will go down and review all of the historic pavement in the area in order to see how damaged it is, after which they will update their register using that information. She said that their results will be of interest to us because if there are pieces, or certain areas that they remove from their historic register, that will obviously make a difference in what we preserve, or what we will have to mitigate.

Ellis commented that two of our biggest questions right now, that we are just starting to get into, and that is something that the committee will need to come to a consensus on is a mitigation plan for the current granitoid pavement along the corridor, and the side-streets and preservation of any granitoid we want to see. She said that we don't have cost estimates available yet, but she is certain that cost will come into play with any decisions we make as to what type of mitigation plan factors to use.

Ellis stated that at this time they are at the point where they need to get an idea of what type of mitigation everyone can agree with. She said that they are hoping to get a personal e-mail sent out to each of the Steering Committee members asking for their opinions on what they like and don't like about the current proposals, after which a meeting will be held to revise/refine the recommendations and the mitigation and preservation options. She added that they also hope to have received updated information from the State Historic Preservation Commission as to what changes they may be making based on their study as well.

Ellis reported that the last public meeting/open house will be held on September 30th at United Lutheran. She added that they are also continuing to send out newsletters and mailings to the adjacent property owners along the corridor as well.

Christensen asked how much money was programmed for this study. Ellis responded that \$50,000 was programmed. Christensen stated that it seems like everyone wants to put a roundabout someplace in Grand Forks, and maybe this is the place to do that. He asked what the

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 21st, 2008**

guess, plus or minus a million, is as to how much this project will cost to implement. Haugen responded that the estimated cost in 1994 was \$1,000,000, and based on inflation, etc., his guess today would be about \$3,000,000. Christensen stated, then, that we might as well just forget about getting this project done. He asked what funding sources would be available to fund this project. Haugen responded that this corridor is eligible for federal funds, so at least 80% of the cost could be covered with federal funds. He added that we could also argue that some of the improvements are safety related, therefore eligible for safety funds. Christensen asked if funding this project with federal funds, would other federally funded projects be affected. Haugen responded that it would impact the City's current program. He added that it would set the stage for the City to consider programming the project in 2013 as projects are already programmed through 2012, or next year the City could shift some of its currently programmed projects in 2010 to 2012 around to free up funds to do this project sooner.

Information only.

MATTER OF UPDATE ON 32ND AVENUE CORRIDOR STUDY

Haugen reported that this is just an update on the signal coordination plan that was implemented in July on 32nd Avenue. He referred to the consultant's draft report of the benefit analysis, included in the packets, and explained that we were able to achieve improved flow along the corridor, and the benefit/cost ratio was 29 to 1.

Haugen commented that there is still some work to be done, including having the consultants return after Labor Day to repair a hardware malfunction that occurred during their visit and to finalize the timing plans and observe traffic flow once UND is back in session. He stated that after that we should have the final signal coordination plan along 32nd Avenue in place. He added that some of the future recommendations include some geometric improvements at 34th and 38th Streets, which is consistent with our Long Range Transportation Plan; and then to have the City start a signal timing program whereby we can periodically monitor traffic flow along these corridors, and have the ability to tweak the signals rather than waiting to do major updates every five or six years.

Information only.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Civic Auditorium Update

Christensen reported that it was brought to his attention that there is a study going on with the Civic Auditorium. Haugen responded that it is part of the Downtown Plan Study that is going on. He added that staff just received, from one of the sub-consultants, a market analysis of the downtown concerning future housing and future office/retail/commercial space, which will be presented to the Downtown Technical Steering and Downtown Steering Committees. Christensen asked if it could be presented to the Finance Committee as well. Haugen responded he would place it on the next Finance Committee agenda.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE
GF/EGF MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD
Thursday, August 21st, 2008**

Christensen asked how long it would be before the Downtown Plan report would be completed. Haugen responded that the final version should be available by the end of the year, however the draft plan should be presented to the various entities in October or November. Christensen asked if a lot of public meetings and comments sessions would be necessary. Haugen responded they would. Christensen stated, then, that this means that we won't get anything done until 2011. He asked if there would be any chance of moving this along more quickly so that if we want to do something next year we could do so, could we ask that the final report be completed by November 1st. Haugen responded that there shouldn't be very many changes required to the draft recommendations for the final report so you will have the draft during that timeframe.

Christensen stated that what he is interested in is getting input before the recommendations are compiled. Haugen responded that they could do that.

Information only.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY CHRISTENSEN, SECONDED BY MALM, TO ADJOURN THE AUGUST 21ST, 2008, MEETING OF THE MPO EXECUTIVE POLICY BOARD AT 12:46 P.M.

***Voting Aye: Grassel, Beauchamp, Malm, Buckalew, and Christensen.
Voting Nay: None.***

Respectfully submitted by,

Peggy McNelis,
Executive Assistant